Getting Started with Etherfields

Setting up the box

The large quantity of cards, tiles, tokens and other stuff in the box can be a little intimidating at first. This section will help you sort that out.

Cards

Put the 4 card packs labelled “Do not open this deck” at one end of the card tray without opening them. The remaining packs can be put in order where they have visible card IDs in the top right corner, and unwrapped. The remaining packs can be put in order by looking at the first and last cards and matching them to find the sequence. They probably came packed in the correct sequence to start with.

Use the visual guide on Page 2 of the Rules to separate:

- The four Dreamer Influence Decks (for Free Spirit – blue, Gambler – yellow, Specialist – green and Tough Guy – red), and put one of the 4 Basic Action Cards with each Dreamer Influence Deck.
- 5 Starting Item cards – which make up the starting Item Market deck. Shuffle these.
- 12 Turn cards. Shuffle these.
- 10 Fate cards – which make up the Starting Fate deck. Shuffle these.
- 6 Flaw cards – which make up the Starting Flaw Deck. Shuffle these/
- 81 Influence cards – which make up the Starting Influence Market deck. Shuffle these.

The remaining cards are the SECRET cards, which are all identified by a code in the top right corner, so they can be located for a specific Dream or as necessary. Keep these strictly in order as you will need to search through this deck when instructed to locate specific cards.

All of these can now be placed back in the card tray, separated by the Small Dividers shown on page 3 of the rules. You may find it helpful to label the dividers. You can use the 5th Dreamer divider if you have the 5th player expansion, or to keep the Thorn Knight cards. There will be nothing in the Notes, Removed

Cards, or Seasons sections yet. The Current Dream divider is a placeholder you can use when needed. I put all of these decks behind the Secrets cards. When playing, I pull one of the "Do not open" packs out to give a little free play between the cards, to make searching easier.

If you are sleeving your cards, you will need to use the additional trays that came with the sleeves. This guide assumes you are using unsleeved cards and tiles.

Tiles

Make sure the packs of square tiles are in sequence, and unwrap them all. Unlike the cards, these are in reverse order based on the code in the top right corner. You can keep them this way, and just be aware when searching that the code numbers go from the first at the back to the last at the front. Or you can optionally reverse the order of the tiles. Put them all in the tile tray, and put the dividers at the back for later use.

Other components

Punch out all the masks, player boards and tokens (though you may want to leave the triangular "signs" tokens in their punchboard. It has been suggested this provides a little more context for the images, and can make it easier to manage/reference the tokens.) You will probably want some extra zip-lock bags to separate the tokens – divide them between bags however is convenient. If you do punch out the triangular tokens, sort them by the colour of their backs. Put all the entity tokens in one bag, State, Threat & Morphing each in their own bag, hour counter with the dice, and most of the remaining tokens in a single bag.

Starting the Campaign

Select Dreamers

Each player should choose one of the 4 (or 5 if you have the 5th player expansion) Dreamers. Don't worry about synergies at this time – all combinations work just fine, and don't worry about choosing the "optimal" character – you can change Dreamers later if you want, and how you develop your character may be more important, so just choose which ever Dreamers sound most fun. If you're playing solo, I suggest starting out with just one Dreamer.

Take the matching player board with the darker background, the mini, Dreamer starting influence deck, Basic action card, Dreamer personal token, and probably a zip-lock bag to keep the token and any Ether markers you collect. (The cards will go back in the card tray between sessions).

First setup

Setup the board (see the right hand side of rules page 5, ignore the Game Setup section on the left for now). Take the Turn cards, Fate deck and Flaw from their sections of the card tray and place in their slots on the board.

Don't shuffle your Influence deck before first play (though it's no big deal if you've already done that). Put the Influence deck face-down to the left of your player board, and the Basic Action card to the left of that. Your discard pile will be to the right of the board, face up, and your Sealed cards can be placed face down to the right of that, or anywhere convenient.

Start the Tutorial Dream by finding the Tile **I-01 X**. This is a Gate Tile. These are used to setup and start Dreams. They include the entry conditions and Setup instructions for each Dream. **District** and **Enter** do not apply to this first Gate. **Setup** instructs you to find all the Secret cards and Tiles with code **I-01** (Cards: A, B, C and D, and Tiles SETUP, S, T, V, W, Y, and Z). You can mark the spot in the Secret cards with the Current Dream small divider, and just draw them as you need them, or pull them all out and leave them face down somewhere convenient until they are referenced. Likewise for the Secret tiles and the Current Dream large divider. (Some later Dreams will have you return cards/tiles to where they came from, so the Current Dream dividers can help.) Turn over the **I-01 SETUP** tile to show a part of a map, and place it on the board with the **A2** label on the card lined up on top of the **A2** label on the board This is the first tile of the Dreamscape map for this Dream. **Turn Deck** says "12", so ensure all 12 Turn cards are shuffled and placed face-up on the Turn deck slot. Open the Secret Scripts book to **s.450** and read to find out how to start the Dream. Turn over the **Gate** tile and place it on the Dream Gate Tiles slot – it describes the **Goal** of the Dream, and special instruction for when a Dreamer dies or the Turn deck runs out.

Dream I-01 Before It Started

There may be some minor spoilers here, but you'll find out quick enough anyway.

As per **s.450**, you can place each Dreamer mini on either the top left or bottom left squares of the map tile, as indicated by the blue Dreamers Entrance icon. Everyone draws 4 Influence cards from their deck to make their initial hand. Staring with the first player, take movements and actions as per the rules, and the hints provided by **s.450**.

There are 5 actions available on the map, and you will probably try all of them before proceeding. Some actions will extend or change the map and give you further available actions.

You may find it useful in Dreams to keep a notepad near, and record the Secret Script paragraph numbers you visit. It can be easy to lose track of what paragraph you were reading when you need to do something in the middle, and it can be hard to backtrack and work it out. Occasionally you might need to note rules which are introduced for the Dream without a reminder card.

If you find a creature (spoilers) – Don't expect to kill it. You may be able to avoid it, relocate it, perhaps even trap it. It will probably be annoying; in the worst case it can kill you.

If you find items – use the 5 in the Item Market. If you don't, don't worry, I might be making this up to keep you guessing.

Eventually (we hope) you will escape the Dream and be victorious. At that point you will be instructed how to set up things for the ongoing campaign.

Setting up the for the rest of the Campaign, and entering the Dreamworld Map

When the first Dream is finished, you will read **s.133**. Of special note:

- Memories (**II-41 L**) – Take the one for your character, and keep it until you meet the condition on it. The rest go in your Storage area in case they are relevant to a future Dreamer, and get put in the Notes section of the card tray when not being used in a game.
- Slumber Map tiles (**II-36 A**) – these make the initial Slumber Map deck. Take the two with "Starting" written on them, flip them over face up and place them on the Dreamscape board covering the B2 and B3 spaces. Place your Dreamer minis on the Dreamscape, each in a space adjacent to the Dreamers Entrance. The remaining two Slumber tiles can be shuffled and place face down on the Slumber Map tiles slot. (When you pack it away between sessions, put these tiles, and any cards on them, behind the Slumber Map tiles divider in the Tile tray.)
- Slumber tiles (**II-37 A**, **B**, **C** & **D**) – tile **A** has a different colored back; put it face down on the Slumber tile slot, the shuffle the remaining 3 tiles and place those face down on top of tile A. This makes the Slumber Deck. (When you pack it away between sessions, put this deck behind the Slumber deck divider in the Tile tray.)
- Gate tiles (**II-39 B** and **II-39 O**) – Gate tiles that will allow you to enter Dreams when you meet the requirements on the tiles. Have a look at the requirements. Both require 2 keys (you don't have any yet), one requires you to be on the Gate location of the Suburbia map, and the other on the Gate location of the Metropolis map. You'll see these locations shortly. For now, put these tiles in one of the Dream Gate tiles envelopes.
- "Gain card **D**" – as we are still finishing of the initial Dream, this means card **I-01 D**. As a Wisdom card, it goes straight in the 9-slot sleeve for future reference. It provides a reference to symbols on the Dreamworld Map.
- Dreamworld Map tiles (**I-01 S** & **T**) – these make up the initial Dreamworld map. Place them in the appropriate spaces on the Dreamworld Map board.
- Shopping cards (**II-41 C**) – these 3 cards go on the Storage section of the board. They can be used to make purchases if you are on a Shop location of the Dreamworld map. They are discarded back to the Secret cards when used.
- Seasons cards (**II-41 I**) – these 6 cards make up the Seasons deck. Don't shuffle them, but turn over the Ordinary Days card (it should be the first card) and put it on top of the Seasons deck, and place the deck on the Seasons cards slot of the board. (This deck will go behind the Seasons small divider when you pack up between sessions).
- Awakening wisdom card (**II-41 M**) – place it with the other wisdom card(s) in the 9-slot sleeve.

The starting Dream can be discarded by placing the Dream Gate tile and Dreamscape tiles from the board and placing them behind the Removed Tiles divider in the tile tray, and the cards (**A**, **B** & **C**) behind the Removed cards divider in the card tray.

Don't forget, each Dreamer received 3 Ether markers during this step. They can be used to purchase items or Influence cards when you go shopping.

When you're ready to continue, resolve the Awakening wisdom card, which provides a reset for each Dreamer:

- You get to put all of your Influence cards in the discard pile, regardless of whether they were sealed or in your hand.
- Discard any remaining Distress markers, Shining gems or keys (you won't have any keys yet).

- Reshuffle Influence market, Item Market and Slumber decks (placing the Delta Phase Slumber card on the bottom of that deck).
- This is the point at which you can change your Dreamer if you wish. You probably won't have any need to rebuild your Influence deck at this time.
- Choose one mask for each Dreamer from the two they have available, and place it in a holder to show it is active.
- You can place up to 3 Items from Storage into the Item slots on the board.
- Place the Team mini on the Awakening location of the Suburbia Dreamworld map tile.

You are ready to play.

Packing the Game Away

If you want to save your game and pack things away after a Dream, you just perform the first 3 steps of Awakening, which resets your influence deck, removes Distress, Keys and Shining Gems. Put each deck back in its space in the box according to the dividers, Item cards in the Storage can go with the Notes cards. The remaining steps of Awakening should be performed when you unpack the game to play your next session (make sure you follow the Game Setup instruction of page 5 of the Rules first – that will remind you which decks need shuffling and which don't). This minimizes the amount of information and component separation you need to manage between games.

While not discussed in the rules, you can save your game at other points between Slumbers and Dreams, without losing your Dreamworld map location or progress. It just means you will need to keep track of a few extra details. For a Dreamer's Influence deck I do this by stacking my: hand (face-up), Basic action card, Deck (face-down), mask (active one face-up), Progress cards (face up/down as appropriate) and other cards, discard pile (face-up) and sealed cards (face down). Keep Distress, keys and other markers and tokens with your Ether and Dreamer personal token, and note down your Dreamworld location. Store any overlay cards or Quirks with the Dreamscape tiles so you can reconstruct the Dreamscape. This is functionally equivalent to leaving the game setup on the table and walking away for a while.

Dreamworld

Starting on the Awakening location, you can move down to the left to a Fate card location, to the right to a Fate card and Slumber location. There are no other options to start with.

Drawing Fate cards may lead to one of the following:

- Place a Dreamscape Slumber Tile, and place a Quirk if possible. Take the top tile from the Slumber Map deck (not the Slumber deck). Place it in the Dreamscape, ensuring the coordinate symbol on the tile is placed on the matching coordinate symbol on the board. This may result in the tile being offset from other tiles. All tiles make a contiguous map.
- Other immediate effects described on the card. Some cards may remain in play until used. Some cards may be removed from the game when resolved. If not otherwise stated, cards will go to the bottom of the Fate deck when resolved or if they can't be played.

Drawing Slumber cards may:

- Do something only if a condition is met. This will allow you to move around the Dreamworld map without constantly entering Slumbers.
- Spawn an entity (initially a Wraith) and enter the Dreamscape to encounter it. You can **Skip**, and take the consequences (**s.770**), or enter the Slumber, and start taking turns; your minis should already be on the Dreamscape map. Assault it to "*chase out*" the wraith, ending the slumber and gaining loot according to the current Turn card. But you can only do that if it is not in Dark terrain. You can either lure it onto the light, or try and replace the Dark terrain marker with Light. But the longer you take the more you will suffer. And you only have 4 turns to do it. (I don't believe you can use the Deliverance Secret Scripts reference in the bottom right at this time).
- Delta Phase. You will find this slumber card soon enough. It will explain itself.

You may enter Sanctuary, Train Stations and Shopping locations as you travel the Dreamworld map. Take advantage of the Shops to acquire new items or add cards to your Influence deck. You won't initially be able to use Train Stations.

You should eventually acquire sufficient Keys to enter one of the two Gates matching the available Gate tiles. Then you will deconstruct the Dreamscape and return tiles to the Slumber Map tile deck and Fate Cards to the Fate Deck (placing them at the bottom of the deck) before setting up the Dream.

You will enter either **I-02** "Not Alone in the Dark" on the Suburbia tile, or **I-15** "I'll Never Forget Those Sunshine Days" on the Metropolis tile.

A few things to remember:

- Take note of any Special Rules or actions listed on the back of the Gate tile, they may be vital to succeeding at the Dream.
- Look closely at each Dreamscape tile you place, there may be clues.
- If you reveal a Wisdom Card, put it in the sleeve for future reference. You will also find cards which provide rules for just the current Dream. Put them somewhere convenient for reference, and remove them with the other Dream specific cards at the end of the dream.
- Don't worry if you miss things. Trying to use every action on the Dreamscape will probably run you out of time. Some cause negative effects, some just waste time. The game will still work if you miss things. If it's critical, the game won't let you proceed without it.
- Don't forget the Clock! If you need an extra move to stay safe, or you're running out of time, use the Clock.

From this point, you are on your own.

Remember to check the Etherfield FAQ site for further clarifications:
https://it296605.wixsite.com/etherfields/forum/